

I CLAIM AS MY INVENTION:

1. A method for automated identification of health risks for a patient, comprising the steps of:

obtaining health-related patient data, as accumulated patient data, for a patient and storing said accumulated data in an electronic data bank;

providing an expert system which is operable on said accumulated data, using a stored medical rule system, to identify a health risk for said patient;

obtaining new health-related data for said patient and entering said new data into said electronic data bank for storage together with said accumulated data;

upon every entry of new data into said electronic data bank, simultaneously playing said new data together with said accumulated data in said expert system with said expert system being started upon each entry of new data to operate on said accumulated data together with said new data to produce a modified health risk evaluation; and

making said modified health risk evaluation available from said expert system to at least one of the patient and an attending physician.

2. A method as claimed in claim 1 wherein the step of entering said new data into said electronic data bank comprises entering said new data into said electronic data bank at a data entry location, and wherein the step of making said modified health risk evaluation available comprises making said modified health risk evaluation available at said data entry location.

3. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising the additional step of producing a therapy proposal for said patient in said expert system in addition to said modified risk evaluation, and making said therapy proposal available to at least one of the patient and an attending physician simultaneously with said modified health risk evaluation.

4. A method as claimed in claim 1 comprising the additional step of producing a examination proposal for said patient in said expert system in addition to said modified risk evaluation, and making said examination proposal available to at least one of the patient and an attending physician simultaneously with said modified health risk evaluation.

5. An apparatus for automated identification of health risks for a patient, comprising:

an electronic data bank containing accumulated health-related patient data for a patient;

an input terminal connected to said electronic bank for entering new patient data for said patient into said electronic data bank;

an expert system having access to said accumulated patient data and said new data in said electronic data bank, said expert system having predetermined medical rules stored therein; and

a linkage connecting said input terminal and said expert system for automatically starting said expert system upon each entry of new data into said electronic data bank via said input terminal, for causing said expert

system to operate on said new patient data and said accumulated data, in combination, using said medical rules to produce a risk evaluation for said patient.

6. An apparatus as claimed in claim 5 wherein said electronic data bank has a central server associated therewith, and wherein said expert system is integrated in said central server.

7. An apparatus as claimed in claim 5 wherein said electronic data bank comprises a plurality of decentralized data banks, said decentralized data banks respectively storing portions of at least said accumulated patient data, and wherein said linkage makes the respective portions of said accumulated patient data simultaneously available to said expert system upon each entry of new patient data via said input terminal.